

glowing results obtained?' Campbell was concerned particularly about the consequences of the indiscriminate use of freedom for dangerous, suicidal or otherwise vulnerable patients:

It is easy for an official who never has had charge of an asylum to talk loosely in praise of extended freedom for the insane, but an asylum-doctor who knows the forms of insanity practically, who is entrusted by relatives with their insane, will have a bad time of it if a patient, while he is declared to be unfit to have care of himself, suffers in person from want of ordinary care and precaution. I think any unbiased mind must consider the medical man very reprehensible who gives entire freedom to those clearly unfit to use it aright.

The flurry of interest in 'open-doors', a century ago, settled with the adoption of a balanced approach to what was both desirable and practical, bearing in mind the safety of patients and the extra burden on attendants. The views of F. Needham, Medical-Superintendent of Barnwood House, Gloucester, and President-Elect of the Medico-Psychological Association in 1886, are representative:

While personal freedom has been widely extended to the patients, I have still been unable to persuade myself of the practical value or expediency of the general application of an arrangement which has been called 'the open-door system', and which I have, therefore, not attempted to adopt generally. In every institution for the insane this, which has been claimed as a modern system, has been in partial operation for many years past and in this Hospital it prevails to as wide an extent as I consider to be compatible with the safety of the patients and the proper discipline of the establishment.<sup>9</sup>

In fact, 'open-doors' has become part of an established approach to the treatment of lunacy in asylums. Alexander Urquhart, of Murray's Royal Asylum, Scotland, saw this in historical perspective:

... on both sides of the Tweed there is a system of granting liberty on parole, of sending patients out on leaves of varying duration, of minimizing irksome and degrading restraints, of encouraging intercourse with the outer world, and of approximating asylum-life to the domestic ideal in so far as possible. This is not the fashion of a day, but has been built up in studied evolution since Conolly and his compeers began

their labours; and we have to acknowledge and found upon the experience of the men who showed how asylums could be conducted without mechanical restraints.<sup>10</sup>

The outcome of this period of innovation and controversy, therefore, was that the day-to-day life of many patients in asylums had been enhanced and, at the same time, the over-enthusiastic adoption of a fashionable new method of treatment, a perennial pitfall in psychiatry, had been checked. This is perhaps a timely reminder of the need to view in historical perspective, all the currently fashionable plans for the dissolution of mental hospitals and the development of community care.

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- <sup>8</sup>CAMPBELL, J. A. (1884) On escapes, liberty, happiness, and 'unlocked doors', as they affect patients in asylums. *Journal of Mental Science*, **30**, 197–210.
- <sup>9</sup>PSYCHOLOGICAL RETROSPECT (1886) Asylum reports, 1885. *Journal of Mental Science*, **32**, 285–86.
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## New Journals

**British Journal of Holistic Medicine:** This journal was launched earlier this year and will be published bi-annually under the auspices of the British Holistic Medical Association. The Editor is Dr Anthony Fry, Munro Clinic, Guy's Hospital, London SE1 9RT.

**Family Practice:** This new quarterly journal is intended to be of interest to those practising, teaching and researching in the fields of family medicine, general practice and primary care in developed countries. The Editor is Professor J. G. R. Howie, department of General Practice, University of Edinburgh, 20 West Richmond Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DX.

## De Lancey Prize

Professor Henry Walton of the Department of Psychiatry, University of Edinburgh, has been awarded the de Lancey Prize of the Royal Society of Medicine for services linking Medicine and the Arts. The award is in recognition of Professor Walton's part in founding the Scottish Committee on Arts and Disability in 1980 and his subsequent chairmanship of the Committee. SCAD is now supported by the Scottish Office of the Government and continues as the Committee on Arts for Scotland, of the Scottish Council on Disability, under Professor Walton's chairmanship.